ABSTRACT

EFFECT OF VARYING INTER PREGNANCY INTERVALS ON PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

BACKGROUND:

Short and long inter pregnancy intervals are known to adversely affect the mother and baby. By finding out the optimal IPI, steps to promote appropriate birth spacing can be undertaken. Correct spacing of pregnancies is a cost effective way to improve neonatal and possibly maternal morbidity and mortality. The adverse effects of short IPI are explained by the maternal nutritional depletion hypothesis. The adverse effects of long IPI are explained by the physiological regression hypothesis.

AIM:

To analyze the effect of varying inter pregnancy intervals on two important pregnancy outcomes namely low birth weight and preterm births.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This is a retrospective observational study conducted among 500 participants. The study included non primi women with singleton gestation >28 weeks with known IPI with no history of abortion in the IPI delivering at IOG Egmore. Data was collected by interviewing the participants and results analysed.

RESULTS:

When compared to intervals <18 months and >24 months, IPI 18-24 months were found to have the least number of preterm births and low birth weight babies. This relationship persisted when stratification was done for maternal age. The caesarean section rates are high for intervals >24 months. The study also found that the post partum contraception usage is low (21.2%).

CONCLUSION:

While the current suggestion by the WHO is to wait for at least 24 months before planning the next pregnancy, a number of studies including the present one show that the 18-24 months interval is associated with the best outcomes.

KEY WORDS:

Inter pregnancy intervals, low birth weight, preterm birth, birth spacing, contraception, breast feeding.